

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will return to legislative session.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DURBIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

TRIBUTE TO KELLY CLARK

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, today I rise to recognize Kelly Clark, the snowboarder from West Dover, VT, who on Sunday earned, for the United States, the first gold medal of the 2002 Winter Olympics in the women's halfpipe event.

That is not "half pint." That is "halfpipe." One has to know the skiing history to understand what a halfpipe is.

Kelly's enthusiasm and tremendous skill and ambitious drive are equaled only by her beaming smile. Kelly's achievement on Sunday was more than athletic ability. It means more than pride to her fellow Vermonters. A gold medal in an Olympic event brings people together, especially when they need it most. When have Americans needed someone to root for more than we do right now?

I am especially pleased, of course, that the focus of our attention and congratulations is an 18-year-old from southern Vermont. Thank you, Kelly, for giving your best, for making us proud, and for winning the gold.

I do not know how many have watched these events, but snowboarding is something which really started pretty much in Vermont. It has been perfected there, and now it is all over the world.

Today is Kelly Clark's day.

I yield the floor.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I am pleased to join with my Maryland constituents and millions of Americans in celebrating African-American History Month this February. Since 1926, February has been designated as a time to recognize a crucial part of our diversity: the vast history and legacy that African-Americans have contributed to the founding and building of our Nation. While we have much to celebrate in the achievements of many African-Americans, and the great strides this country has made towards true equality, there is also much work to be done.

This year's theme, designated by The Association for the Study of African-

American Life and History, ASALH, is "The Color Line Revisited: Is Racism Dead?" The fact that this question can even be posed indicates the progress that our society has made in race relations over the past 50 years. We must attribute this progress to the sacrifice, vision and commitment of thousands of African-Americans and others who proved that the true strength of our Union lies in the diversity of our population.

One such visionary is Marion Wright Edelman, the founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund. Recently I had the opportunity to hear Ms. Edelman speak at the Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Breakfast at Anne Arundel Community College in Maryland. Marion Wright Edelman shares Dr. King's vision of a unified and equal Nation, and acknowledges the great strides that have been made in working towards this vision. Through her work at the Children's Defense Fund, Marion Wright Edelman is helping to ensure that all children in America get a healthy, fair and safe start in life.

Yet despite the great strides that have been made toward eliminating racism and inequality, Ms. Edelman stressed that many disparities still exist. The Children's Defense Fund reports that nearly one in three African-American children are poor in America, compared with 13 percent of white children. Many children are educated in substandard schools. A disproportionate number of African-American children are without health insurance. And African-American juveniles are over-represented on every level of the criminal justice system.

But there is hope, Marion Wright Edelman and the Children's Defense Fund are working hard to correct these inequalities. The Children's Defense Fund acts as a voice for children in America who cannot speak for themselves, and Marion Wright Edelman has been a tireless advocate for children who are suffering and need a helping hand.

There is much that we in Congress can do to continue to improve the quality of life for African-Americans and for all Americans. We can help the parents of working families by raising the minimum wage. We have already passed the "Leave No Child Behind" education reform bill that will provide new standards for schools and teachers, and will help make quality education available to all Americans. We can work on election reform to ensure that all voters are properly registered, and every vote is counted. And we need to make health care available and affordable for African-Americans and all Americans. With these and other reforms we will move further down the path to equality dreamed of by Dr. King.

The terrorist attacks of September 11 left us shocked and wounded, yet we found once again that the strength of this Nation lies within its people and

its diversity. In the months that have passed since that day, we have shown the world how people of all races, colors, religions and nationalities create the fabric of our Nation, a fabric that is richer because of our differences. This month we honor the special contribution African-Americans have made to that fabric. Through African-American History Month, we celebrate how far this country has come, and remind ourselves of how far we have to go.

• Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, while we are celebrating Black History Month, I want to rise to honor a man named York, arguably the first black American to make a significant contribution to, and cast a vote in, my home State of Oregon.

Most Americans know very little about York, Captain William Clark's "servant," as Clark called him, who made the journey to Oregon with the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1803. Despite his important role in opening the West, it is unfortunate that York has not been remembered along with other early black Americans who helped shape our nation's history.

William Clark's lifelong slave companion, York was roughly the same age as Clark, and by all accounts the two were friends for most of their lives. York was bequeathed to Clark by his father, John Clark, in a will dated July 24, 1799, and on October 29, 1803, he joined Clark and Captain Meriwether Lewis on a journey into history.

York, when he is remembered, is often remembered best for the curiosity he aroused in Native Americans he met during the journey. Apparently, York so fascinated the people he met that there exist numerous stories of women attempting to wash his skin white. According to journal accounts, he sometimes used their fascination to the expedition's advantage, intimidating Arikaras tribesmen, for example, with fantastic tales of his wild youth as a cannibal.

Perhaps because of such stories, York is often described in an inaccurate, negative manner. However, common characterizations more accurately reflect the racial biases of historians than they do York's actual contributions to the expedition. Judging from the journals kept by members of the expedition, York was a reliable and indispensable part of the expedition. During a time when most black Americans were denied access to firearms, York was counted on as a skilled hunter. York also served as a cook, a confidant, and a nurse, as did each member of the party from time to time. One account has York charging into a flash flood, fearing for the safety of Clark, the famed translator Sacagawea, her son, and her husband, Toussaint, who had not yet made it to safety.

The most telling example of York's role in the expedition occurred in November 1805, when the group decided to winter in Oregon. Finding little game on the northern bank of the Columbia